

**Media statement**  
**4.00pm, 5 March 2014**

## **Access to our network proving difficult**

Inability to access the electricity network has hampered efforts to restore power today. Access issues may continue to be a problem for the next few days.

At 4.00pm, 3,500 customers are without power and we expect that the majority of these will be without power overnight tonight. Many customers may face some days without power. We ask people to prepare accordingly.

“Yesterday, the gale force winds were the issue for our network. Today, it’s flooding, slips and the necessary road closures which are causing us problems. Quite simply, we cannot get to many parts of our network to repair those power lines that were damaged yesterday by falling trees. Coupled with rising flood waters affecting substations and kiosks, this storm is proving unique due to its ongoing and multiple impact nature”, says Rob Jamieson, Orion Chief Executive.

“Our crews and contractors are working under difficult conditions to get power back on. In the last few years, time after time nature has hammered Canterbury and our network, so the resilience and hard work of lines crews, and the understanding and patience of customers are to be thanked.”

The majority of customers that remain without power are around Banks Peninsula, with most of the peninsula affected. Some pockets of Christchurch and surrounding areas are also experiencing outages.

In areas where access is possible, all available crews are working to restore power as quickly and as safely as they can.

Floodwaters have resulted in us cutting supply to two kiosks on our network today. This was for safety reasons and to limit damage to these assets. We switched load from others parts of our network to affected areas, in order to minimise outages. Continued rain and flooding may mean that more substations and kiosks may need to be turned off. This may result in some new outages later today and tomorrow.

Orion urges anyone in Christchurch and central Canterbury who sees a fallen power line to stay well clear and call 0800 363 9898 immediately.

**An update on the number of customers without power will be provided on the homepage of our website, [www.oriongroup.co.nz](http://www.oriongroup.co.nz), at 8.00pm tonight and again tomorrow morning at 7.30am. No further media release will be issued today.**

**ENDS**